

GUIDELINES FOR COURTROOM BEHAVIOR CAO INSTRUCTION 12

1. Be on time for your trial. Allow extra time to find parking.
2. Dress neatly.
3. No food or drinks are allowed in the courtroom.
4. It is not advisable to bring your children. Ask someone to watch them for you.
5. Report to the courtroom you are assigned to.
6. Review your paperwork before the trial. Be familiar with your papers. You may use written notes or an outline during the trial. Stick to the facts. Do not ramble when offering evidence to support your side of the story.
7. When the judge asks you to speak, stand up and face the judge.
8. The trial will proceed as follows:
 - a. The judge will ask you and the other party to make an opening statement. This should be a brief statement that tells the judge what you are asking for. You can refer to your proposed order of child support, parenting plan and decree. The petitioner speaks first, then the respondent.
 - b. After opening statements, the petitioner calls his or her witnesses to testify. After each witness has testified, the respondent may ask questions of the witness (cross examination). The petitioner may **ask** questions on redirect. The respondent then puts on his or her witnesses and the process is repeated. There are very specific rules of evidence which apply.
9. When the judge asks you questions, be direct. If you don't know an answer say so. Do not be afraid to admit that you do not know something.
10. Take your time when answering questions. Give the answer as much thought as you need to understand it and formulate your answer. You may be ordered to explain your answer.
11. Be respectful and courteous with the court. Always address the judge as "Your Honor". Do not interrupt. If something needs to be **clarified**, wait until it is your turn to speak or ask to speak again.
12. Be sincere. Do not be sarcastic or argue with the court or the other party. Stay calm.
13. If you are stating dates, times and places, etc. be exact. If you cannot be exact, make it understood that you are only estimating.
14. Speak clearly and distinctly, using words, phrases and terminology that you understand. Keep your hands away from your mouth and speak loudly enough so the judge can easily hear you.

15. Remain courteous to the judge after the ruling. Ask the judge whether you or the other party will write the court order (the judge will not write the order). The judge must sign the order before it becomes effective. You will probably need to arrange a later time to come back to the court to have the judge sign the final papers. Get a date from the judge's bailiff before you and the other party leave.
16. You may bring a friend for moral support. That person must remain silent.
17. Avoid laughing or talking about the case in the hallway or restrooms of the courthouse in such a way that the other party and counsel and witnesses for the other party may see you or hear you.
18. These are the rules that apply to attorneys and you must follow them as well.